STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Status of implementation of recommendations contained in First, Second and Third Reports of Standing Committee on Information Technology

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): Sir, in pursuance of the direction issued by the hon. Chairman, Rajya Sabha under Rule 266 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States and issued *vide* Rajya Sabha Parliamentary Bulletin Part-II dated 28.09.2004. I am making this statement on the status of the implementation of recommendations contained in the first, second and third reports of the Standing Committee on Information Technology in respect of three Departments under the Ministry of Communications and InformationTechnology.

Report No. 1 in respect of Department of Information Technology

(i) Standing Committee on Information Technology examined the Demands for Grants for the year 2004-05 of the Department of Information Technology in its meeting held on 18.08.2004. The report was presented to Rajya Sabha on 24.08.2004. The report contains 16 recommendations.

(ii) These recommendations of the said Committee mainly relate to need for additional funds, allocation of two-three per cent of their Plan Budget for it, requirement of additional funds for National Action Plan on e-Governance, establishment of National e-Governance Fund, apprehension in utilisng funds by Media Lab Asia and to make efforts and take steps to attract more sponsorship in Media Lab Asia projects, enhancement of outlays of C-DAC, similar efforts be made for setting up of Community Information Centres (CICs) in other States of the country as has been done in Jammu & Kashmir, better utilisation of funds provided for Manpower Development for Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC) Design, recognition of DOEACC "B" level course by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and to give serious thought to the functioning, manpower requirement, preserving talent, congenial environment in National Informatics Centre by utilising modern management techniques and attracting fresh talents as adopted by multinational companies.

(iii) Government has accepted all the 16 recommendations and taken all possible steps towards implementation. Planning Commission

appreciated additional funds requirement of Department of Information Technology and allocated Rs 929.30 crore for the year 2005-06. All State Governments have been advised to allocate, at least, three per cent for e-Governance applications. Report on programmer management structure and funding arrangement of national e-Governance Funds is under active consideration.

(iv) Eleventh Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations of the Committee contained in its First Report on Demands for Grants for the year 2004-05 relating to the Department of Information Technology was presented to Rajya Sabha on 09.03.2005.

Report No. 2 in respect of Department of Posts

(i) Committee examined Demands for Grants of the Department of Posts of the year 2004-05 on 10.08.2004 and presented its Second Report in this regard to the Rajya Saha on 24.08.2004.

The Report contains 12 recommendations.

(ii) These recommendations of the Committee mainly relate to the need for expansion of Postal Network to serve the people at large; to increase share of Speed Post in express mail market by adopting commercial approach; to achieve the target of computerizing 5616 post offices within the 10th Plan period; to chalk out detailed policy for construction of department's own buildings; to take up with Ministry of Finance to enhance the per account/per certificate remuneration for savings bank agency work and to treat pension payments on common head as in the case of other Ministries to reduce working expenses of the Department; the need for increasing Plan expenditure for North East; the need for full utilisation of allocation under the 10th Plan; to overcome recurring losses and optimise the bouquet of services/products of the Department; and the need for imparting proper and qualitative training for staff.

(iii) All the 12 recommendations of the Committee have been considered in the Department of Posts. The action proposed by the Committee has already been taken/initiated on all recommendations.

(iv) The Standing Committee *vide* its 12th Report presented to the Rajya Sabha on 09.03.2005 has accepted the observations made by the Government in respect of five recommendations. In respect of four recommendations, the Committee does not desire to pursue in view

of the reply of the Government. There are Recommendations/ Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration.

Report No. 3 in respect of Department of Telecommunications

(i) The Committee for examining the Demands for Grants for the year 2004-05 of the Department of Telecommunications met on 10th August, 2004 and presented its 3rd Report in this regard to Rajya Sabha on 24.08.2004. There are altogether 22 recommendations.

(ii) These recommendations mainly relate to reimbursement of Licence fee and Spectrum charges to BSNL, higher allocation of funds for replacement of MARR VPTs, checking erosion of customer base of BSNL, timely procurement of material/equipments, fulfilment of targets for North-Eastern Region, enforcement of Licence Agreements on operators, reduction of waiting list and fault rate, recovery of outstanding arrears, improving marketing strategies by BSNL, improving the quality of services by MTNL & minimizing fault rate, revival of ITI Ltd., ensuring generation of required revenue by C-DOT, updating of research by C-DOT, strengthening institutional capabilities of TRAI and upgrading the knowledge base, utilisation of budget provision by Telecom disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal, Wireless Planning & Coordination Wing and Wireless Monitoring Organization.

(iii) All the above recommendations have been considered and accepted by the Government. Action has been initiated for implementation of all the recommendations.

(iv) Thirteenth Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations of the Committee contained in its Third Report on Demands for Grants for the year 2004-05 relating to the Department of Telecommunications was presented to Rajya Sabha on 09.03.2005.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Sir, it is a very good practice that the Ministers themselves are presenting the Report of the Standing Committee recommendations. I think we also need to make some changes in the Rule Book to provide for intervention by the Members if there is any point of clarification. I think some rules, which are there by convention established in this House for *suo motu* statement should be adapted in this case.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): That is why, you have been allowed to speak.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: There is no need for discussion.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: But, Sir, it has to be treated as....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): But, it is being treated like that. That is why....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, in the Rule Book, that change has not yet been incorporated.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): I am saying that that is why, you have been allowed to speak. I agree with what you have said. Please, go ahead.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, I am saying that it must be incorporated in the Rule Book.

Sir, on page 2, in the second portion relating to the Department of Telecommunications, at item no. 2, the hon. Minister has given the broad areas on which the recommendations were made. The fourth line of that item talks about strengthening institutional capabilities of TRAI and up-grading the knowledge base. Now, some time back, a big issue was raised. I think I too had raised the issue in the House and I had also put several questions to which I have received answers. Now, TRAI has categorically said, as I was informed by the Government, that TRAI does not have the data for outgoing and incoming calls. It is their basic function to monitor that according to the TRAI Act. Now, if the Government has accepted this recommendation and institutional capabilities have been reinforced, how can TRAI come up with this kind of response that they do not have the wherewithal to monitor the outgoing and incoming calls? You need to corroborate the data provided by the operators within the country with those of the foreign operators and foreign regulators. Actually, the ATC calculations cannot be made in that case. ATC calculations show the amount of resources, which are going to strengthen the expansion of our network in the rural and backward areas. It will also be related to the other question of North-East that you have shown as another recommendation which you have accepted. Now, the capability of the Government to also implement the other recommendations depends crucially on this aspect. So, if steps have been taken, how can TRAI come up with such response that they do not have the wherewithal to do basic functions, which they are designated by the TRAI Act?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, yesterday when a similar Report was presented on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce, I had occasion to mention that for the first time such a format was actually presented by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Chairman had decided that such a Report should be presented in a format that is intelligible and adds value to each Member. With all due respect to my good friend and colleague, the Minister for Communication and Information Technology, it is impossible from these two pages to figure out what the Standing Committee has said and what the Ministry is actually doing and what things have been accepted by the Government and what action has been initiated. You cannot have a discussion on this bureaucratic cowardism. I think, Sir, the format representing Column 1 Standing Committee Recommendations; Column 2 the comments of Ministry and Column 3 Action Taken by the Ministry may please be prescribed for each Ministry. We had the same problem yesterday, and we are having the same problem with the statement, and I venture to suggest that we will continue to have the same problem with other Ministries also. The Ministry of Agriculture has presented the similar Report which was found of great value by the Chairman and all the Members. I would request you, Sir, to make this a standard format for all Ministries. Thank you.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, my point is about the Department of Posts. Out of twelve recommendations, five have been accepted by the Government and after seeing the reply from the Government relating to four recommendations, the Committee does not decide to pursue any of the replies given by the Government. Sir, regarding modernisation of Postal Department and the need for increasing the efficiency in the Postal Department, good recommendations have been given. While reiterating the acceptance of the Government on the recommendations given by the Committee, this is the right time that I would like to tell the hon. Minister that not more has been done in the Postal Department to increase the efficiency, productivity and, moreover, using the Postal Department as one of the organs like a bank which is happening in other countries. The postal savings have been increased. People in the rural areas do not have the banking facilities. So, the Government should think on that line. Finally, in spite of the fact that we have brought a lot of input, the modernisation, the computerisation, the service conditions of the postal employees is very poor, especially extra-departmental employees issue is pending for a long time. Therefore, Sir, if I get this opportunity to speak here, we would like to bring this fact to the notice of the hon. Minister. I will

be very glad if a lot of funds are provided to the Postal Department which has been neglected in the past. This time the younger and energetic Minister is taking keen interest in improving the Postal Department. I really appreciate and welcome him to do that and employees' problems can be taken care of by the hon. Minister on priority basis.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): Do you want to reply, Mr. Minister?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: No, Sir.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: I thought the rule that you have referred to and the rule that I have referred to say that if somebody is seeking clarification that clarification has to be provided by the Minister. After all, we established the Government.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): Mr. Minister, you give, at least, some assurance.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Through you, I respect the feelings and suggestions made by the hon. Members...*(Interruptions)*....

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED): May I suggest, Sir? He is from the other House. After making a statement normally in the other House, no clarification is sought and given...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Since you are new to this House, you are not aware of the convention of this House...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): Let him say his point...*(Interruptions)*... I am not agreed to his point, but let him say...*(Interruptions)*... He has also every right to speak...*(Interruptions)*... Let him speak.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Therefore, if he is in a position to give the reply, he can do so, otherwise, he can give in writing to the Member.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): You see, the convention is that when there is a statement, the clarifications are sought. And, the Minister is supposed to give some assurance, or he can say, "I don't want to do it.", or whatever reply he wants to give. So, let him, at least, say something. We should not object to it. And, he is a Minister for both the Houses, not for only one House.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, I respect the suggestions given by the hon. Members. I will definitely get back to the Members directly. For the suggestion made by the hon. Member, Shri Jairam Ramesh, regarding the format of the Statement, I definitely feel that next time, when I present the Report, I will do it in a much better format, similar to that of hon. Minister for Agriculture. As regards the point made by Shri Narayanasamy, definitely we are looking into it; we are looking into solving the issues relating to the extra-departmental people. And, we are trying all the ways to improve the services of postal trade, that is more profitable for them also and more respectable for the people who are working there.

Discussion on the working of Ministries of Power and Non-Conventional Energy Resources

श्री मंगनी लाल मंडल (बिहार): माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ कि आपने मुझे ऊर्जा मंत्रालय और गैर-पारंपरिक ऊर्जा स्रोत मंत्रालय के कार्यकरण पर अपनी बात रखने का, चर्चा आरंभ करने का अवसर प्रदान किया है। यह जगजाहिर है कि देश में ऊर्जा का संकट है और करीब करीब सारे क्षेत्रों में, चाहे कृषि का क्षेत्र हो, औद्योगिक क्षेत्र हो या घरेलू कंजम्पशन के लिए हो, डोमेस्टिक कंजम्पशन के लिए हो, ऊर्जा का बड़ा भारी संकट है और जो हमारी इन्सटाल कैपेसिटी है, उतना भी हम जनरेट नहीं कर पाते हैं। यह हमारे लिए सबसे बड़ी विडंबना है। सरकार ने इसमें कारगर कदम उठाने के लिए, क्रांतिकारी कदम उठाने के लिए वर्ष 2003 में एक कानून बनाया था — इलेक्ट्रिसिटी एक्ट, 2003 और ट्रांसमिशन, जनरेशन, डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन, इन तीनों चीजों में अपेक्षित सुधार लाने के लिए यह कदम उठाया। यह बात ठीक है कि प्राइवेट सेक्टर को भी इसमें इन्वाइट किया गया है, जो एक अच्छा कदम है, लेकिन यहां जो हमारे वामपंथी साथी हैं, उनका इसमें कुछ एतराज है। उनका एतराज भी सही है कि इससे विकास के मामले में, ऊर्जा उत्पादन के मामले में जो क्षेत्रीय संतुलन है वह असंतुलित होगा, बिगड़ेगा, क्योंकि किसी क्षेत्र में ऊर्जा का उत्पादन ज्यादा होगा और किसी क्षेत्र में ऊर्जा का उत्पादन कम होगा। सरकार ने यह आश्वासन दिया है कि इसमें अपेक्षित सुधार किया जाएगा। मैं सहमत हूँ अपने वामपंथी भाइयों के परामर्श से, कि इसमें सुधार करना चाहिए और ऊर्जा के मामले में क्षेत्रीय संतुलन न बिगड़े, इसमें कारगर कदम उठाए जाने चाहिएं।

महोदय, एक स्थिति यह सामने आई है कि 31/01/2005 तक जो हमारी इन्सटाल कैपेसिटी रही, वह 1,15,544 मेगावाट है। इसमें कई हैं, जिनमें थर्मल का अभी भी सबसे बड़ा सेक्टर है, फिर विंड्स, पवन है, हाइड्रो है, न्यूक्लीयर है, ये हमारे ऊर्जा के क्षेत्र हैं इनमें जो हमारी इन्सटाल कैपेसिटी है, उतना हम उत्पादन नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। जो सप्लाई पोजीशन है, 1997-98 में जो हमारा